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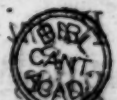
A

SERMON

Preached before the

Lord Mayor,

AND THE



Court of ALDERMEN,

AT

GUILD-HALL CHAPPEL,

ON

July the 16th. 1682.

By *RICHARD KIDDER.*

LONDON:

Printed by *H. H.* for *Walter Kettilby*, at the *Bishop's Head* in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard. 1682.

Moore, Mayor.

Martis xxiiii°. die Julii 1682, *annoq; Regni Regis* Caroli *Secundi*, Angliæ, *&c. xxxiv°.*

THis Court doth desire Mr. *Kidder*, to Print his Sermon preached at the *Guild-Hall* Chappel on Sunday last, before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of this City.

748.90

Wagstaffe.

To the Right Honourable Sr. *John Moore* Lord Mayor, and the Court of Aldermen, of the City of *London*.

My Lord,

THat the ſincere practice of Chriſtian Religion does very much tend to the peace and happineſs of this lower World, I have in ſome meaſure repreſented in the following diſcourſe. What ever other defects may be found in it, I am ſure it proceeded from a ſincere intention, and was deſigned to an excellent End. Nor can it be thought unſeaſonable to preſs men to Peace and good will at ſuch a time as this. Upon theſe Conſiderations I am very little Concerned at the cenſures of angry and peeviſh men.

That I have made it publick is in me intirely an act of obedience. Nothing leſs than your Commands ſhould have prevailed with me to do that. If it ſhould gain its End, as it would be matter of unſpeakable joy to me, ſo I ſhould have great

Cauſe to Bleſs the Holy name of God, who does great things by the moſt inconſiderable inſtruments.

I am bold to prefix your Lordſhips name, and expoſe theſe following papers under your Patronage: And ſhall not detain your Lordſhip any farther than to tell you that I am

My Lord,

Your Lordſhips moſt

humble and moſt

obliged ſervant,

Rich. Kidder.

1 Pet. 3. *Ver.* 11.

Let him ſeek peace and Enſue it.

WE are often heard to complain of the evil of the times and days in which we live. And tho' theſe complaints are not without a Cauſe, yet they are generally without fruit. And it is an argument of great folly to be always finding a fault, and not to attempt to rectifie it. St. *Peter* tells us how we may contribute towards the removing thoſe evils under which we groan; and procure to our ſelves a more eaſie and proſperous paſſage through this troubleſome World. And that he does in the Words I have now read, and thoſe which immediatly goe before them. *He that will love life, and ſee good days*: That is, he who deſires a comfortable and happy paſſage through this World: *Let him refrain his tongue from Evil, and his lips that they ſpeak no*

Guile: Let him eſchew evil and do good, let him ſeek peace and enſue it. Three things he commends to our Care and practice to this purpoſe, as the great and known remedies of the evils of this preſent life. And they are theſe,

First, The Government of our tongues. *Let him refrain his tongue from Evil, and his lips that they ſpeak no Guile.* Innumerable are the Evils which flow from an unbridled tongue: *It is a fire, a World of iniquity: It defileth the whole body and ſetteth on fire the courſe of nature: It is an unruly evil full of deadly poiſon.* This little member hath driven peace from the Earth, it hath been the plague of Kingdoms and Societies, and brought Confuſion and Death upon Mankind. A very great ſhare of the miſeries of humane life are owing to the intemperance of an evil tongue. Three ſins, the Wiſe men among the *Jews* tell us, *are puniſhed in this life and exclude men from the next, Idolatry, uncleanneſs and Murder; and an evil tongue is no leſs an evil than all theſe put together.*

Jam. 3. 6, 8.

Maimon: H. Death. c. 7.

Secondly, The amendment of our lives and manners: *Let him eſchew evil and do good.* If we follow our troubles home we ſhall find they are generally owing to our own profane-

ſaneneſs and wickedneſs. And when we complain of evils, we may ſoon find that they are of our own procuring. They are our Luſts and Contempt of God and his holy Laws which trouble us. *Who is he that will harm you if ye be followers of that which is good?* It were very eaſie to demonſtrate, that all our ſmarter evils are but the effect of our own profaneneſs or hypocriſy. Nothing lays a foundation for our temporal happineſs like true piety and a conſtant Care of doing well: And becauſe we make not this our Care we are left to conflict with many of the evils of life, which this courſe would have prevented. v. 13.

Thirdly, A very diligent purſuit of peace. *Let him ſeek peace and enſue it.* I ſhall chooſe to inſiſt on this; for I have not time to ſpeak to the two former at large; And ſhall therefore content my ſelf to reflect ſomething upon thoſe as my diſcourſe upon this laſt ſhall give me an opportunity.

I cannot but obſerve, before I proceed any farther, that this duty is preſſed hard upon us, in words that are very Emphatical. It is not enough that we are inclined to peace, and of a diſpoſition that is peaceable. We are not only obliged to imbrace peace when it offers it ſelf to us, but we muſt purſue it

and fetch it back when it ſeems to fly from us. We muſt *follow peace*: nor is it a little care to retrive it will ſerve our turn, we muſt not only *ſeek peace* but *enſue it.* 'Tis not enough that we heartily wiſh for it, but we muſt caſt about and carefully project how we may preſerve and procure it; we muſt *ſtudy to be quiet.* And when it is hard to live peaceably (as it is with ſome froward men) and when it is not poſſible to do it (for it is not always ſo) yet *if it be poſſible* (and ſo it oftner is than we are aware of) or however, if it be not, yet ſtill as *much as lyeth in us* we muſt *live* peaceably with all men.

Heb. 12. 14.

2 Theſſ. 4. 11.

Rom. 12. 18.

For the better ſpeaking to the words I have read, I ſhall,

First, Shew what we are obliged to do toward preſerving and retriving of peace; in compliance with the exhortation which my text lays before us of ſeeking and enſuing peace.

Secondly, I ſhall repreſent to you ſome of the advantages of it, as it hath a tendency toward the happineſs of our preſent State.

Thirdly, I ſhall conſider the uſe and application of the whole.

1ſt. I ſhall ſhew what we are obliged to do in compliance with the direction in my text of

of ſeeking peace and enſuing it. I ſhall conſider the duty of men in their private Capacities, and not take upon me to give advice to our Superiours, from whom we receive our Laws.

Nor ſhall I at this time ſeparately ſpeak to peace as it relates to Civil, and as it relates to Religious and Eccleſiaſtical Societies and Concerns. For tho theſe are of a diſtinct conſideration yet my time will not allow me to handle them apart. And therefore, I ſhall ſpeak to thoſe particulars which relate to both theſe.

Nor ſhall I offer any thing to this purpoſe but what is confeſſedly our Duty and what (if we will put in practice) will certainly preſerve peace where it is, and will call it back where it is wanting.

Having premiſed theſe things, I ſhall ſhew what we are obliged to do in compliance with the direction in my text *of ſeeking peace and enſuing it*, in the following particulars.

(1.) We are ſtrictly obliged in order to the preſerving and retriving of peace to reform our hearts and lives. We muſt ſubdue our luſts and bridle our paſſions, and govern our tongues, and conduct our ſelves by the Holy

Laws

Jam. 4. 1. Laws of our Religion. *From whence come Wars and Fightings among you? Come they not hence, Even of your lusts, that War in your members?* nothing contributes more to the peace of Societies than the ſtrict practice of our Duty, and conforming our ſelves to the precepts of Religion, I do not mean in points that are controverted, but in ſuch as are plain and owned to be our duty: Such as theſe, viz. *the governing our Tongues*, without which our Religion is but a vain pretence. Jam. 1. 26. Tit. 3. 1, 2. And we muſt ſo far govern them too, as to ſpeak evil of no man.

The being cloathed with humility and meekneſs: 'Tis our pride that makes us quarrelſome and contentious. *Only by pride cometh contention*; And *he that is of a proud heart ſtirreth up ſtrife.* It's the *meekneſs of Wiſdom* which St *James* oppoſeth to bitter envying and *ſtrife in our hearts.* Our Religion commends to us the profoundeſt humility, the greateſt modeſty and meekneſs, and gentleneſs imaginable. It puts us upon avoiding vain-glory as that which tends to ſtrife and debate. And this the Apoſtle preſſeth us to with great Vehemence: His words are very moving. *If there be therefore any conſolation in Chriſt, any comfort of Love, if any fellow-*

Prov. 13. 10. 28. 5. Jam. 3. 13, 14.

ſhip

ſhip of the Spirit, if any Bowels and Mercies; Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the ſame love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through ſtrife or vain-glory, but in lowlineſs of mind let each eſteem other better than themſelves.

Again the taking great care that we do no wrong, and the being ready to make amends when we have been ſurprized into it, and to be reconciled to our Brother who hath wronged us, are plain precepts of our Religion, and do manifeſtly tend to the peace of the World. 1 *Cor.* 6. 7. *Eph.* 4. 32.

And ſo do thoſe other precepts alſo whereby we are obliged to abide in our calling, to mind our own buſineſs, and avoid the being buſy-bodies in other mens matters. We have our callings to mind, our families to govern (and to account for) our hearts and tempers to reform, and Souls to ſave, which we too often neglect when in the mean time we mingle our ſelves in foreign matters which are not like to turn to any good account. 1 *Cor.* 7. 20. 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 11. 2 *Theſſ.* 3. 11, 12.

We ſtrive with one another becauſe we neglect the practice of our Religion: We are divided becauſe we are carnal. We neglect our God, and hence it is that we are left

to

to contraſt with quarrelſome and unreaſonable Men. 'Tis an excellent ſaying of the ſon of *Sirach*. *Whoſo feareth the Lord ſhall direct his Friendſhip aright. For as he is ſo ſhall his Neighbour be alſo.* We are chaſtiſed by one another for our neglect of our duty to God. *With the froward God will ſhew himſelf froward*, or *wreſtle*, as our marginal reading hath it. God ſuffers us to wreſtle with froward men becauſe we have been negligent of our duty. Our quarrelling with each other is an Argument that we are not at peace with God. *When a mans ways pleaſe the Lord he makes his Enemies to be at peace with him. Solomon* of all Men living had the greateſt Experience of the truth of theſe words. His very name implyes *peace*, and he was choſen to build an houſe for God becauſe he ſhould enjoy peace, and *David* was refuſed becauſe he was a man of War. He built an houſe for God and enjoyed great peace. But his peace laſted no longer than his ways pleaſed God. *But* Solomon *forſook the Lord. He loved ſtrange Women and did evil*, and then it follows, *the Lord ſtirred up an Adverſary to* Solomon, Adad *the* Edomite, *and* Rezon, *the* ſon of Eliadah, *and* Jeroboam *the* ſon of Nebat. *David* was very ſucceſsfull till he ſlew

Eccluſ. 6. 17.

Pſ. 18. 26.

Prov. 12. 7.

1 *Kings* 11. 1, 4, 6, 14, 23, 26.

ſlew *Uriah* and took unto him his Wife; after that his own Subjects and his own Son rebel againſt him, and the Prophet tells him plainly: *Now therefore the ſword ſhall never depart from thine Houſe, becauſe thou haſt deſpiſed me.* 2 *Sam.* 12. 10. The People of the *Jews* while they ſerved God were at peace with their Neighbours, but when they departed from their God they were ſoon afflicted by their evil Neighbours.

(2.) In order to peace we are ſtrictly obliged to obey our Superiours as far as lawfully we can. That is, we muſt obey them when they command what God hath not forbidden, and where they forbid what he hath not commanded. In other caſes we muſt obey God rather than Men. A ready complyance with this rule doth very much tend to peace. We ought to obey our Superiours where we can do it without a wrong to our Conſcience. And where we cannot in every thing obey yet in that caſe we ought to go as far as we can. If we do not this we are ungovernable and obſtinate and do not as much as lies in us towards the living peaceably with all Men. It is juſt and reaſonable that we do what we can; 'tis what we may do and what we muſt. 'Tis no matter what men call this compliance while we do our Duty. *Rom.* 13. 1. 1 *Pet.* 11. 13.

We are ſafe in that obedience which God hath not forbid: where God hath not forbid, our Superiour may command and we muſt obey. We are to judge not what will be the Event of this compliance but of the lawfulneſs of it firſt, and then of its tendency to the gaining of Peace: That which was lawful and indifferent before, becomes our duty when once it is commanded by our lawful Superiour. And then we muſt obey not only for wrath but alſo for Conſcience ſake. The Queſtion, in which we are concerned, is not what is moſt expedient to be injoyned (this belongs to our Governours to conſider) but what is lawful on our part to ſubmit unto. The living up to this rule would have kept us from our very miſchievous extreams. Thoſe men that think ſome things amiſs ought not therefore in all things to forſake the Communion of our Church. And thoſe men who ſometimes communicate with us, to ſave their Secular concerns, will be without excuſe if they do at other times with-draw from us without any juſt cauſe. Tho' ſomethings ſhould be amiſs among us, yet will not this juſtify a ſeparation. We need not Erect Calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*, becauſe we deem ſome thing amiſs in the worſhip of the true God.

God. Our ſeparation cannot be juſtifiable, unleſs it be neceſſary: And when we can with a ſafe Conſcience, in great meaſure continue in Communion with a Church, it will be hard to underſtand how a total ſeparation can be juſtified. Let us not deceive our ſelves, God is not mocked; We ſhall ere long appear before an impartial Judge, who tho he be ready to pardon our miſtakes, will yet puniſh our frowardneſs and perverſneſs.

(3.) In thoſe things in which we diſſent from others we are to judge for our ſelves only, and not for others. *Let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth: why doeſt thou judge thy Brother, or why doeſt thou ſet at nought thy Brother? Haſt thou faith? have it to thy ſelf, before God.* It is unreaſonable in matters of doubt and queſtion that I ſhould judge for my ſelf, and for others too. If other men are fallable, ſo am I. And tho I muſt not go againſt my own Conſcience, yet I ought not to make that the common Standard of other mens. The practice of this rule would in great meaſure prevent that cenſuring and detraction which is a ſin of an high nature, and which greatly obtains among us. *Rom.* 14. 3. *v.* 10, 13.

We may in modeſty ſuppoſe that our

Brother, from whom we diſſent, may be better informed than we are. Truth is not always found among the moſt confident. There are many that boaſt they have it, who carry a lie in their right hand. It is a true obſervation (and grounded upon the Holy Scripture) that the *weaker any Chriſtian is the more prone he is to cenſure and judge another.* Rom. 14. 3.

'Tis enough that we judge for our ſelves, and *happy is he that condemneth not himſelf in that thing which he alloweth.* v. 22. Our Conſcience is our own guide but not another mans. And it is but our *guide* at beſt, for it is not our *rule.* It is often miſinformed and miſleads us, and can have no juſt plea to be the conductor of Mankind. It is very fit that when we diſſent we ſhould do it modeſtly, and that when we judge for our ſelves, we ſhould not preſcribe to others alſo.

(4.) That we be very diligent in the ſearch after truth, as well as Sincere lovers of it. Every Sincere and good man muſt needs be a lover of truth. The Heathen, could ſay that *the Soul of man is not willingly deprived of the truth.* And certainly every good man thinks himſelf obliged to inform himſelf a right. If he do this he will not ſpeak evil of things which he hath not conſidered,

Πᾶσα ψυχὴ ἄκουσα στέρεῖται τῆς ἀληθείας, ὡς λέγει Πλάτων. Arrian. Epict. L. 1. C. 28.

dered, but uſe all diligence to get himſelf rightly informed. He will be the more obliged to do this, becauſe *Error ſtalks about the World in the Mantle of truth*, and is many times dreſſed up like it: In many caſes it requires great pains and skill to know one from the other, and therefore we muſt lay aſide prejudice, and all worldly intereſt, be poſſeſſed of great ſimplicity of Spirit, and of the travellers indifferency; avoid the ſtudy of Parties, and Faction: Be very humble and modeſt and diligent in the uſe of means, and very fervent in our prayers to God. If we do thus we are in the way of truth and peace alſo.

non enim ſumus ii quibus nihil verum eſſe videatur; ſed ii qui omnibus veris falſa quædam adjuncta eſſe dicamus, tantâ ſimilitudine ut in iis nulla inſit certa judicandi & aſſentiendi nota. Cicer. *de nat. Deorum. l.* 1.

(5.) That we preſerve in our minds a difference between the great things of Religion and the ſmaller things relating to it, and let them have a proportionable regard and eſteem. There are ſome things which are the greater things of the Law which we ought to be greatly concerned for, ſuch are, *Judgment*, *Mercy* and *Faith*: or, as St. *Luke* hath it, *Judgment* and the *Love of God*. There are other things, which we generally quarrel about, that are not the eſſentials of Religion, but rather the skirts and fringes of it. We ought not to have a like regard for doubtful

Matt. 23. 23. *Luke* 11. 42.

doubtful Opinions as for the Precepts of Chriſt and Articles of Faith. The Fates of an Empire, and of the Church do not depend upon little circumſtances. *The Kingdom of God is not in Meats and Drinks, but righteouſneſs and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt. He that in theſe things ſerveth Chriſt is acceptable to God and approved of Men.* The Evil of the ſmaller things about which we contend, lies more in our opinion than in the things themſelves. *I know and am perſwaded by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that there is nothing unclean of it ſelf, but to him that eſteemeth any thing to be unclean to him it is unclean.* 'Tis a mean thing to contend about ſmall things with a great and diſproportionate Zeal. There happened a bitter diſpute between two learned men of the laſt Age concerning the matter or Stuff of a part of the Prieſts Garment under the Law of *Moſes*: The contention was great but the ground of it very trifling: Like the differences between the School of *Hillel* and *Shammai*, who diſſented from each other concerning the precedency of their Bleſſing God for the day or for the Wine; of their waſhing their hands, and mingling their Cup; nay, and about the place where they ſhould lay the

Rom. 14. 17, 18.

Beracoth c. 8.

the Napkin with which they had wiped their hands too, whether upon a Table or a Cuſhion. They contended for trifles and neglected the weightier things of the Law; and ſo do we alſo, we quarrel about trifles and neglect our unqueſtionable duty to God and Man. And ſeem to have but little regard to thoſe things in which our practice is mainly concerned.

(6.) That we endeavour to be exemplary in all thoſe things in which we are all agreed. We ſhall find that theſe things are many and of great Weight, and that what we differ about bears no proportion to thoſe things in which we all agree. That we ought to love God with our whole heart, to be Loyal to our Prince, merciful to our poor Brethren, juſt to all men, humble and modeſt, &c. we are all agreed is our duty: And certainly if theſe things were our practice and our ſtudy, we ſhould conſult our own peace and that of the community. They are very inſincere men, who are Enemies to all Religion upon a pretence that they know not what to chooſe, becauſe of the Various diſſentions about it, when in the mean time they neglect the practice of thoſe things in which all ſides are agreed. *Whereto we have already* Philip. 3. 16.

already attained, let us walk by the ſame rule, let us mind the ſame things.

(7.) We muſt put as favourable a conſtruction upon things and judge as charitably of all men as they are capable of. It is highly fit and very reaſonable we ſhould do thus, and it is but the meaſure which we all expect from other men. It is no great matter if by practiſing this rule we ſhould miſtake. An Error here would be of the ſafer ſide. We were better be miſtaken in our charity than forfeit it. Our Religion forbids us to ſpeak evil of any man, and charity will not allow us to think any. We muſt not judge as we would eſcape being judged. It is very dangerous for us to miſtake through want of Charity. *If ye have bitter Envying and Strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not againſt the truth. This wiſdom deſcendeth not from above, but is earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh.*

Jam. 3. 14.

(8) We muſt be careful that we give no offence to our weak Brother in things that are indifferent and indetermined. It is the Apoſtles rule. *For meat deſtroy not the work of God: All things indeed are pure but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat Fleſh nor to drink Wine, nor any thing whereby thy Brother ſtumbleth, or is offended*

Rom. 14. 20, 21.

offended, or is made weak. Again, *if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no Fleſh while the World ſtandeth, leſt I make my Brother to offend.* 1 Cor. 8. 13.

We that are ſtrong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to pleaſe our ſelves. Let every one of us pleaſe his neighbour for his good to Edification: For even Chriſt pleaſed not himſelf. Rom. 15. 1.

We ought to have reſpect to other men in the uſe of our own liberty. It is not enough that we conſider what is Lawful, but we muſt conſider alſo what is expedient and fit. Chriſtian Charity will teach us to pleaſe our Brother with the loſs of our own eaſe and freedom: We ſhall be well content to deny our ſelves for the benefit of other men; And as much as Lawfully we may to become all things to all that we may gain ſome: I grant that the matter of ſcandal hath been miſunderſtood; and I know that in things of their own nature indifferent, I am obliged to obedience by the determination of my Lawful Superiours. But ſtill where I am at liberty, it will become me to comply with the weakneſs of my Brother if I may by any means win him to the truth.

(9.) Let us often ſit down and conſider how great mercies we enjoy, and with all thankfulneſs bleſs the Holy name of God.

This Method will divert our complaints into praiſes, and greatly tend to the peace of the Church. We complain even then when we have great cauſe to call up all that is within us to bleſs the name of God. We are wanton and hard to be pleaſed, and murmur and contend when we have great cauſe to bleſs God.

Let us think how it was with the firſt and beſt Chriſtians, when it was death to profeſs Chriſtianity, and they who profeſſed it muſt offer incenſe to an Idol, or undergo the ſevereſt torments which the wit or malice of their Enemies would expoſe them to. And let us conſider the condition of our Brethren in *France*, who are for conſcience ſake forced out of their Native Country; but (Bleſſed be God) it is not ſo with us; we may ſecurely profeſs and practiſe Chriſtianity and lead much better lives than we do, without offending any Edict or Law of the Land: And tho ſilly People may ſcoff at us for being Religious, yet this does not break our bones, nor need it make us uneaſy.

The time was when our Fore-Fathers had but a ſad choice, either to profeſs the beleif of a lie or burn at a Stake; when they were not allowed the uſe of the Holy Scriptures, and when the ſervice of God was performed in

in a ſtrange tongue. How glad would thoſe holy Martyrs have been of theſe mercies which we deſpiſe and turn our backs upon; and where we murmur thoſe holy Souls would have given great thanks.

It would once have coſt us dear to have profeſſed Chriſtianity. Thanks be to God we may ſafely practiſe it now.

We now enjoy our Bibles with many other helps to our devotion: We have the liberty of Gods houſe and cannot want inſtruction if we will but entertain it, we may ſerve God in publick frequently, and in our houſes and cloſets, as devoutly aswewill. We enjoy great advantages of becoming better than we are. And what greati ngratitude is it to over-look ſuch unſpeakable mercies of God!

We provoke God to deprive us of our bleſſings. And when we are deprived we ſhall call to mind how happy we once were. God grant this may not be our portion. And that while we murmur for what we want we be not ſtripped of what we do enjoy.

The Manna lyes round about our tents and we loath it and would have higher food: God grant that we be not plagued with cleanneſs of teeth, or biting Serpents; and that for deſpiſing our heavenly

food we be not reduced to the Onyons and garlick, and bondage of *Egypt*. The days may come when we ſhall in vain call back the bleſſings which we now deſpiſe, when we that are impatient under the Whip may be chaſtiſed with Scorpions and fall under Axes. It becomes us much better to improve what we do enjoy, than contend unchriſtianly for what we paſſionately deſire.

Philo de plantat. Noe.

Philo the *Jew* tells of an Ancient tradition which vvas handed dovvn among the *Jews* to his time, and it is this; that vvhen God had finiſhed the Creation of the World, He asked one of his Prophets, vvhether he thought there vvere any thing vvanting in Heaven or in Earth: The Prophet returned an anſvver, vvith vvhich God vvas vvell pleaſed, *viz.* that there vvas nothing vvanting but *Some to praiſe and Celebrate the great Creator*, upon vvhich aroſe πάμμεσον ᾠδὴ ὑμνωδῶν γένος a number of Creatures chanting out the praiſes of the great Creator: From hence *Philo* infers that as *it is moſt agreeable to the Supreme Being to do good, ſo nothing becomes the Creature better than to Celebrate the Creators benefactions.* If there be any thing vvanting among us there is nothing more viſibly ſo than thankfulneſs to God for the great bleſſings vvhich vve enjoy. (10.) Let

Οἰκειότατον ἐστιν ἔργον, Θεὸν μὲν εὐεργετεῖν, γένεσιν δὲ εὐχαριστεῖν.

(10.) Let us put up our fervent prayers to God for the peace of the Church and State: To God who maketh men to be of one mind and who is able to unite the hearts of thoſe who ſtand at diſtance and defiance againſt each other: To God who is the God of Peace, and Unity and Love. Let us lift up our wearied hearts and eyes to him, and never give him reſt till he make our *Jeruſalem* the praiſe of the whole Earth.

II. I ſhall now repreſent to you ſome of the advantages of peace and Unity and its tendency toward our happineſs.

Peace is ſo great a bleſſing that the Ancient *Jews* were wont by it to expreſs all manner of good, and the ſum of all that happineſs which we are capable of. And the Heavenly hoſt upon the Birth of the Meſſias, the great Prince of peace, proclaimed *peace on Earth.* *Luke* 2. 14.

We may gueſs how much Peace and Unity tend to make us happy if we conſider the miſchiefs of ſtrife and contention. *Where Envying and ſtrife is there is confuſion and every evil work.* *Jam.* 3. 16.

Who can expreſs the miſchiefs of Quarrels and civil Wars? How much theſe tend to the debauching of a Nation, and the aboliſhing of Juſtice, and perverting of righteouſneſs? Theſe

Theſe are attended with the death of many innocent men, and the ruin of the moſt proſperous Families, and many more Evils than the time will allow me to reckon up.

And for diviſions in the Church, and undue quarrels about matters relating to Religion, the experience of all ages declare the miſchievous effects of them. Theſe have deſtroyed all good Order and Diſcipline, and have unhappily made void the excellent purpoſes of the Chriſtian Doctrine. Theſe contentions have commenced upon a miſtake, advanced with a bitter and unholy Zeal and have ended with the loſs of Charity: We quarrel firſt, and then we hate one another, then we ſeparate, and when we are ſtrong enough we perſecute each other. The Church of Chriſt is rent and torn into many pieces and becomes an Akeldama, a field of blood. And while we quarrel the Devil gains his end, and the deſign of our holy Religion is defeated, and we neither enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, nor do we ſuffer others to enter in.

And now we call our wrath by the name of Zeal, we hallow our unjuſt actions and irregular heats, and we contend no longer for truth but victory; and deſign the ruine, not the

the good of one another. We neglect the great things of Religion and are bent upon the devouring of one another.

Theſe contentions have done more miſchief than all the perſecutions put together: More have fallen, and more dangerouſly this way, than by the ſwords of Tyrants and the avowed Enemies of our Religion.

On the other hand Peace and Unity hath given us the advantage of waiting upon God without diſtraction: It ſtrengthens us againſt a common Enemy and commends our Holy Religion to thoſe who are ſtrangers to it. It abates from the care and burden of our Superiours and ſecures our rights and properties. It is at once our glory and our defence, and the ſummary of all the bleſſings of this lower World. It gives us the advantage of diſcerning the truth and doing righteouſneſs: It encourages all worthy and uſeful undertakings, and makes us formidable to thoſe who wiſh us evil. But I ſhall not need to enlarge upon that which is ſo evident and plain: And therefore I ſhall proceed to

The uſe and Application of what hath been ſaid in the following particulars. III.

Firſt, It is evident from what hath been ſaid that our irregular heats and diſputes are

to

to be imputed to our luſts. It is not our Religion but they are our unſubdued luſts which have diſturbed the peace of the Church and State. We quarrel indeed, and pretend Religion, but it is not that which ferments and divides us. Religion gives no trouble to the World: It is a peaceable Inſtitution, and is deſigned to promote peace and good vvill among Mankind. The Church and State vvould ſoon be at peace vvould vve but ſubdue our luſts and bridle our Tongues, and govern our ſelves by the Holy Precepts of our Religion.

It is indeed very poſſible, after all this, that the beſt men may differ from each other: But then their Chriſtian Charity vvill diſpoſe them to forbear and forgive, and to debate vvith great calmneſs and temper, vvhich is the vvay at once to Truth and Peace.

It is unjuſt to charge our Religion vvith our heats and feuds. It is ſo far from being guilty that a great part of its deſign is to make men humble and modeſt, charitable and meek, and greatly diſpoſed to forbear and forgive one another. *The wiſdom that is from above is firſt pure, then peaceable, gentle and eaſie to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocriſie. And the fruit of righte-*

Jam. 3. 17. 18.

righteouſneſs is ſown in peace, of them that make peace.

We do indeed fiercely contend with each other, but it is becauſe we want charity: We neglect that *plain* duty whilſt we are fond of ſome opinion of our own, which is often *falſe*, and at beſt but *doubtful.*

Our Religion is not unfurniſhed with plain rules and precepts (which if obeyed, would be very effectual) tending to preſerve and reſtore peace, and very many powerful motives alſo to engage us to the practice of theſe Divine precepts. If we would on all ſides give up our ſelves to the practice of our Holy Religion, our intemperate heats and quarrels would preſently be at an end. A Careful ſtudy of Charity and Humility, and an Heavenly converſation; The care of governing our tongues and affections, and conforming our ſelves to the excellent, and very plain rule of the Holy Scriptures would ſoon eſtabliſh peace among us.

Secondly, This may ſerve for the reproof of thoſe among us who by their profligate lives, and their intemperate ſpeeches, their

raſh cenſuring and notorious uncharitableneſs lay a foundation for new quarrels and contentions. Theſe are the men that trouble the World. We are not like to *ſee good days* when we run counter to St. *Peters* advice here; For whereas he puts us upon refraining our tongues, upon eſchewing evil and upon doing good, upon ſeeking peace and enſuing it; We take another method, We detract and Calumniate, revile and reproach one another, and even dignities and Magiſtrates do not eſcape us. We eſchew good and do evil, and in ſtead of ſeeking peace and enſuing it, we run from it and ſeem to be reſolved to drive it away.

Let theſe men pretend what they will, either for or againſt the Church, yet are theſe the men who ruffle and diſturbe the quiet both of Church and State. They are the peſts of human ſociety, and the greateſt Enemies which the Government hath, however they buoy themſelves up in their follies under plauſible pretences and profeſſions of better things. If we muſt indeed give an account hereafter of every *idle word*, what a ſad account will they have to give who ſpend great portions of their precious time in ſpeaking

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ing Evil of Dignities and of one another. Who lightly report and ſpread falſe News, and defame and reproach thoſe men that chance either to differ from them, or at leaſt do not hold pace with them in their extravagant heats and indecencies.

I do not reflect upon the faults and miſcarriages of one ſide only. We are all of us too guilty, and have reaſon to ſhare the reproof among our ſelves.

Iliacos intra muros peccatur & extra.

Thirdly, Let me exhort you all to comply with my text, *To ſeek peace and enſue it.*

Such an exhortation cannot be thought unſeaſonable at this time when our heats are ſo extream that we ſeem to have forgotten the obligation which our excellent Religion, and our profeſſion lay upon us of ſeeking and enſuing peace.

It will ſtand us greatly in hand to do what ever we can in our ſeveral places and callings toward ſo good an end. I have laid down ſome rules to this purpoſe, and ſhall not need

to add to them now. I only begg, and beſeech, and exhort you in the Lord, that you would forthwith ſet your ſelves upon the practice of thoſe rules. That you would all in your ſeveral places ſtudy to be quiet: And *if it be poſſible*, which perhaps ſometimes it will not be, yet ſtill *as much as lies in us live peaceably with all men.*

I cannot, when I conſider our preſent heats and animoſities, but be earneſt with you to this purpoſe: I remember well I have ſomewhere met with a ſaying, among the Ancients, of our Bleſſed Saviours, that was received by Tradition tho it be not mentioned by the Evangeliſts, viz. *that we ſhould not be at reſt while we ſaw his followers contending with one another.* This may excuſe my importunity.

Refuſe not I beſeech you this ſeaſonable exhortation: And not do think you comply with it, unleſs you vigorouſly ſet upon the practice of this excellent duty: That you patiently hear it is not ſufficient, it is high time to be doing ſomething tending to ſo good an end.

Methinks

Methinks we ſhould be moved by the experience of former times. *How great a matter hath a little fire kindled?* What woful devaſtations have inteſtine quarrels brought upon the world? And where the firſt ground of the quarrel hath been ſmall the effects have been unſpeakably ſad. The ſeveral ſects, and the quarrels of the *Jews* among themſelves, and the fury of their Zealots were but a prologue to their miſerable deſtruction: The increaſe of the *Ottoman* power in this part of the World, and the ruin of the *Greek* Church was uſhered in and procured by the quarels of Chriſtians among themſelves: Truth it ſelf hath ſaid, and the experience of all ages hath confirmed it, that *a Kingdom divided againſt it ſelf* is *brought to deſolation.* We have had ſad and woful experience of the miſchiefs of an unnatural War; and to this day we groan under the Evils which ſprung from it. Why ſhould we be fond of deſtroying our ſelves, and making our ſelves the Scorn and Contempt of future ages? Is it for want of Enemies abroad that we turn our ſharps upon one another? Matt. 12. 25.

Do we not all juſtly fear our common Enemy who hath been always ready to devour us?

us? Shall we under our fears of Popery open a door with our own hands to let it in? Shall we diſparage our happy reformation by our evil lives and unquiet tempers? Is our *Syracuſe* beſieged while we are buſie in making diagrams, or contending with one another within our gates? We are too much like the *Jews* (God grant we may not be like them in our fall) *If we let him alone*, ſay they of Chriſt, *The Romans ſhall come and take our place and Nation.* Whereas their putting our Lord to death brought the *Romans* upon them. Thus was their carnal policy defeated, and when they pretended to keep off the *Romans* they took that very courſe which brought the *Romans* upon them who did indeed *take their place and their Nation.* We do the very ſame thing: We declaim againſt and make way for our Enemies at the ſame time. By our depraved lives, our inteſtine diviſions, and needleſs ſeparations we advance the intereſt and encourage the hopes of our Common Enemy. *Dum ſinguli pugnant univerſi vincuntur.* We are doing our Enemies work to their hand, and are like to be all vanquiſhed when every one is ſtriving for victory. I fear what the *Jews* are wont to ſay of a drunken man, *that one ſhall not need to throw him*

Joh. 11. 48.

him down, he will fall of himſelf, will be our Caſe. When the Frog and and the Mouſe in the fable were contending for Empire, the bird of Prey came upon them and deſtroyed them both. God grant that it be not our Lot that when we quarrel with one another the Common Enemy do not devour us all.

But what words ſhall I make uſe of to perſwade you to Unity and Concord!

I cannot forbear to tell you that it is your intereſt as well as your duty to ſeek peace and enſue it. This is a powerful argument in other caſes, and does not uſe to fail: Methinks for your *own ſakes* you may be prevailed with. As you would have the comforts of this world and the bleſſings of the next follow after peace. Leave no method unattempted to procure and preſerve it. You are ſure of nothing unleſs you ſecure peace: All your other bleſſings are either involved in this, or the beſt ſecured by it.

I might exhort you to it for your *Brethrens ſake* alſo: But it is not likely that men ſhould be prevailed with to do that for

for the ſake of others which they will not do for their own: We ought however to conſult the intereſt and advantage of others as well as our own. As we tender their Spiritual good and welfare, and their waiting upon God without diſtraction: As we would that our Children after us ſhould be happy here and hereafter: As we have any reverence for our juſt Superiors: Any bowels of Compaſſion for our native Country, or for our friends and relatives, let us enſue peace and do all we can, and pray to him who can do more than we can hope, that it may continue among us, and that the innumerable miſchiefs of war and diſcord may be prevented.

Laſtly, I pray and beſeech you for the Lords ſake alſo. For his ſake who hath Commanded it and annexed a great bleſſing to them who make peace: For his ſake who came to reſtore it to the World; who is the great Mediator, and came to reconcile us to God, and to one another. For his ſake who is the God of peace; For His who is the Prince of peace; for the ſake of that Holy Religion which is the great inſtrument of peace.

I beſeech you by the mercies of God, and by the ſufferings of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by the Comforts of the Holy Ghoſt, by every thing that is Sacred and Holy, that is Virtuous and Good.

Let all bitterneſs and wrath, anger and clamor and evil ſpeaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Chriſts ſake hath forgiven you. Epheſ. 4. 31. 32.

Let that love which moved Chriſt to die for his Enemies ſo far prevail with you as to put you upon living peaceably with your fellow Chriſtians.

Often place before your eyes the example of your Lord, the great Peace-maker of the world: He purchaſed Peace with the price of his blood, bequeathed it to us as the greateſt bleſſing, and hath ſtrictly obliged all his followers to Love and Peace.

Let me beſpeak you in the words of the Apoſtle. *I beſeech you that ye walk worthy* Eph. 4. 1.

of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowlineſs and meekneſs, with long-ſuffering, forbearing one another in love. Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

In the next words follow very powerful motives to perſwade us to this, and we are very deaf and ſtupid if we are not by them charmed into Unity and Peace.

There is one Body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling: One Lord, One Faith, One Baptiſm; One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

I ſhall end all with the words of the ſame Apoſtle. *Now the God of patience and* Rom. 15. 5, 6. *conſolation grant you to be like minded one towards another according to (or, after the example of) Chriſt Jeſus. That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

FINIS.

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